



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

**Submitted to the Children's Committee
Monday, February 27, 2023
Testimony of The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity**

Good morning Honorable Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Transportation Committee:

I am submitting testimony written by Denise Drummond, Legislative Policy Analysts for the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity (CWCSEO). I am pleased to submit testimony in support of the following bill:

*** H.B. No. 1081 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF A GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM ON A SCHOOL BUS AND THE SHORTAGE OF SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS.**

This bill will permit the use of a mobile electronic device for navigation purposes on a school bus by a school bus driver, (2) waive the engine compartment portion of the commercial driver license's test for applicants seeking or renewing a public passenger endorsement to operate a school bus, (3) study policies and initiatives to address the nationwide school bus driver shortage, and (4) permit the advertising of employment opportunities for school bus drivers on school buses.

Connecticut is facing a school bus driver shortage, and the factors influencing the problem are evolving. Districts are being forced to adjust school bus routes, pickup, and drop-off times, as well as canceling buses all together.

A recent national survey states: the staffing shortage in the last school year was most acute for substitute teachers, followed by school bus drivers. The data showed that 57% of school districts surveyed had a "considerable shortage" of bus drivers, a number that increased to 69% in urban districts.¹

Students are being affected by the shortage of bus drivers in a variety of ways. Tardiness results in poor academic performance.² Students who are tardy miss the beginning of their morning classes. The most crucial learning hours of a school day are the morning hours because this is when students are most attentive. Arriving late to class is disruptive to the teacher and other students in the class.³ Tardiness and absenteeism can cause students to feel disconnected with

¹ <https://richmondconfidential.org/2022/12/27/wccusd-bus-driver-shortag/>

² <https://www.verywellfamily.com/nationwide-school-bus-driver-shortage-affects-students-6561061>

³

<https://www.blaineschools.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=12&ModuleInstanceI>

school, which can influence a student's social and emotional learning and may cause dysregulated behavior.

Families are also affected by the bus driver shortage. School districts are responsible for providing transportation to and from school and for many families that is their only option for getting their children to and from school. Working parents are also impacted when last minute bus cancelation notices force parents to be late for work or miss work all together.

The Commission supports this bill and thanks the Transportation Committee for its leadership.